United Nations A/71/PV.1

General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 13 September 2016, 3.50 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the President of the General Assembly

The President: I declare open the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: In accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: It is a great pleasure to join everyone for the opening of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. I congratulate most sincerely His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson of Fiji on assuming the very important Office of the President. Fiji is on the front lines of many key issues on the international agenda, from climate change to disaster-risk reduction, to promoting growth and prosperity for all. His country's perspectives will certainly enrich our deliberations in the months ahead. I welcome the theme that he chose for this session, namely, "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world".

This first year is crucial. It is a time when all Member States should align their policies, programmes and spending behind the 17 Goals. It is also time to bring the Paris Agreement on climate change into force. The high-level event I will host on 21 September will strengthen momentum for achieving that objective this year. The third United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat III), to be held next month in Quito, will be a further opportunity. I look forward to hearing members' strong voice across our agenda. The Assembly will begin work in earnest on Monday with a summit on the plight of refugees and migrants.

And of course, on 1 January 2017, the seventy-first session will welcome the ninth Secretary-General into the Hall and the Secretariat conference rooms. You, Mr. President, will serve as a bridge between my administration and the next, as you said in your acceptance speech (see A/70/PV.118). You will have my full support and that of my team in ensuring a seamless transition. The Assembly will be called upon to address many threats and show its solidarity with people facing injustice. People also look to this organ not just to react to problems, but to work proactively and preventively to better the human condition.

I know, Sir, that you have been undertaking wide-ranging consultations in preparation for the duties you now assume. The Secretariat and I look forward to working closely with you towards a session that

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produces meaningful results for all. I count on your strong leadership.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Item 138 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/71/381)

The President: Next, I would like, in keeping with established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/70/381. It contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that four Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years".

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in document A/71/381?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the seventy-first session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that, for the seventy-first session, the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Cameroon, China, Malawi, the Netherlands, Paraguay, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, and the United States of America.

May I take it that the States that I have just mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Organization of work of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly

Letter from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences (A/71/382)

The President: The Assembly will now turn its attention to document A/71/382, which contains a letter dated 7 September 2016 from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly. Members are aware that, pursuant to section I, paragraph 7, of Assembly resolution 40/243, of 18 December 1985, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during the main part of a regular session of the Assembly, unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

On the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, authorization is thus sought for the following subsidiary organs: the United Nations Appeals Tribunal; the Committee on Relations with the Host Country; the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund; the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination; the Board of Auditors; the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations; the Specialized Agencies; the International Atomic Energy Agency; the Independent Audit Advisory Committee; and the Committee on Conferences itself.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize those subsidiary organs of the Assembly to meet during the main part of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.